

Concerning Medical Literature Sent to Military Camps —A Letter of Appreciation:

(COPY)

HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON, STATION DISPENSARY
FORT MASON, CALIFORNIA

October 13, 1943

Dear Doctor Kress:

The copies of the *Journal of American Medical Association and Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics* arrived today and, on behalf of the staff stationed here at the Station Dispensary, please accept my sincere thanks for your kindness. The journals will be well utilized and will prove of distinct value at this office.

Again, our thanks.

Very cordially yours,

(Signed) JEAN S. FELTON,
Major, Medical Corps, Surgeon.

Concerning a Legal Opinion on Admission of Patients to County Hospital:

(COPY)

Re: Admission of patients to county hospitals.

L. A. Alesen, M. D.
1401 South Hope Street
Los Angeles, California

Dear Doctor:

Please excuse our delay in sending you an opinion with regard to admission of patients to county hospitals.

We will endeavor to set forth in this letter the California law with regard to this question.

The law covering admission of patients to county hospitals is set forth in *Goodall vs. Brite*, 11 Cal. App. (2d) 540, where it was held that county hospitals may admit indigents as patients and may admit so-called "part-pay patients," but may not admit persons financially able to pay the costs of private hospitalization and medical care.

The so-called "part pay" group was defined by the Court to include persons able to pay some portion of the costs of hospitalization and medical care but unable to pay the full cost thereof.

With respect to persons able to pay hospitalization and medical costs, the Court held as follows:

"We, therefore, conclude that the admission and treatment of patients in the county hospital who, either themselves or through legally responsible relatives, can provide themselves with equally efficient care and treatment in private institutions, does not promote the health and general welfare of the citizens of Kern County and is not a proper exercise of the police power of that county and results in the use of public money for private purposes."

The case of *Goodall vs. Brite* is the only California decision upon the subject of admission of patients to county hospitals and is determinative of the present California law.

The Court's ruling, however, against the admission of patients to the Kern County Hospital who were financially able to provide equally efficient care and treatment in private hospitals was based, in part, upon the fact that there were adequate private hospital facilities in Kern County. Further, the Court stated that another class of patients which should be admitted to county hospitals were the victims of public disaster, accident, or sudden illness. This type of patient, the Court said, should be admitted promptly and if subsequent investigation disclosed ability to pay for hospitalization the county authorities could then require them to pay in full the cost of care and treatment received.

In view of these statements in the opinion in *Goodall vs. Brite*, it is our opinion that, if exigencies created by war conditions rendered private hospital facilities in the county inadequate, so that even persons with ample means were unable to obtain admission to private hospitals or proper care therein, it would be proper to admit them to county hospitals, charging a proper fee. If the county hospital is the only institution where hospitalization can be obtained, then it would promote the general welfare of the county to deviate from the rules set down in the case of *Goodall vs. Brite*.

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Very truly yours,

HARTLEY F. PEART.

P. S.: This opinion is concerned solely with questions of indigency and we have not considered other classes of patients who are entitled to admission to county hospitals, such as criminals, insane persons, or those suffering from contagious diseases.

H. F. P.

Concerning Assignment of Hospital Nurses:

(COPY)

ATTENDING MEDICAL STAFF
THE CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL
1414 South Hope Street
Los Angeles

To the Members of the Attending Medical Staff:

The undersigned committee was appointed by the Executive Medical Board to coöperate with federal and state agencies in assisting in the program of providing adequate nursing service in military and civilian service. The Committee has made a study of this problem because of the acute shortage of nurses in our hospital and an analysis of cases in the hospital, and finds the following situation:

First: This hospital, as well as all other hospitals, must coöperate in utilizing the graduate nurses for the most essential nursing services in caring for the ill and injured. Attendants must be trained and used as auxiliary workers taking care of many duties formerly performed by nurses that can and should be performed by attendants.

Second: An investigation has revealed that the medical staff in this hospital is using about as many special duty nurses at the present time as prior to the war emergency. We find that many of these nurses are assigned because of the request of the patient purely from an economic standpoint.

The Committee, therefore, in coöperation with federal and state authorities, seeking to eliminate as much as possible of luxury nursing, requests physicians on the staff of the hospital to only assign special nurses on the basis of medical need. Every morning the Committee will have available from the Director of Nurses' Office a report indicating the special nurse assignments in the hospital, and depending upon the condition of the patient, will give a memorandum to the doctor at various periods requesting him to check the need for continuing the assignment of special nurses.

We, therefore, solicit your consideration of the problem and request your coöperation in trying to assist in the war effort by making more nurses available for essential military and civilian needs.

Very truly yours,

THE COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE MEDICAL
BOARD:

E. J. Cook, M. D., *Chairman*.
George F. Schenck, M. D.
Walter A. Bayley, M. D.
H. D. Van Fleet, M. D.